

City of Takoma Park Residents' Committee On Tax and Service Duplication Issues

December 8, 2004

AGENDA

- 7:00 – 7:05 pm Welcome; Goals for Tonight's Meeting
(Co-Chairs)
- 7:05 – 7:10 pm Report from Staff
- 7:10 – 7:15 pm Review / Adoption of Minutes
- 7:15 – 7:20 pm Opportunity for Public Comment
- 7:20 – 7:30 pm Reports from the Three Subcommittees /
Discussion of Service Area Research Process
- 7:30 – 7:40 pm Discussion of Final Report Format
- 7:40 – 8:40 pm Presentation on City Finances
(Barb Matthews)
- 8:40 – 8:50 pm Meeting Wrap-Up & Evaluation Prep
- 8:50 – 9:00 pm Sub-Committee Regroup

Next Meeting: January 12, 2005

City Staff Contacts

General Administration	Barb Matthews, City Manager BarbaraM@takomagov.org 301-891-7268
Police	Chief Cindy Creamer CindyC@takomagov.org 301-891-7145
Public Works	Alfred Lott, Director AlfredL@takomagov.org 301-891-7626
Housing & Community Development	Sara Daines, Director SaraD@takomagov.org 301-891-7224
Recreation	Debra Haiduven, Director DebraH@takomagov.org 301-891-7226
Communications	Lonni Moffet, Director LonniM@takomagov.org 301-891-7236
Library	Ellen Arnold Robbins, Director EllenR@takomagov.org 301-891-7258

December 7, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: TASDI

FROM: Bruce Moyer and Dan Robinson

SUBJ: January 12 Meeting: Service Subgroups

We recommend that we devote the meeting on January 12 to a more intensive discussion of City services -- led by the Service Subgroups and focused on what the Subgroups have begun to learn and discern. We would expect this discussion of City services to occupy most of the January 12 meeting. The discussion may even run over to the January 26 meeting.

If this is an agreeable course of action, then the Service Work Group and its Subgroups have their work cut out for them between now and January 12, especially with the approach of the holidays. To prepare for the January 12 meeting, we suggest the following:

1. Meetings with City Staff. Between now and December 17, each Subgroup should plan to meet with the respective City staff member handling that service to inquire and learn more about:

- The respective city service and how it is delivered
- The City's and County's respective service levels in delivery
- Respective costs and rebate paid by MC to TP
- Formulae/methods of calculating county rebate
- What, if anything, the county fails to account for in determining the rebate
- Other constraints
- Alternative availabilities, etc.

This intensive review will require at least one meeting with the staff member, perhaps more. It also may also involve requests by the Subgroup to the City staffer for further information. This will require some advance scheduling and coordination by the Subgroup.

2. Service Work Group Meeting. It also would be useful for the entire Service Work Group to meet prior to January 12, in order to prepare for the report-out and discussion to TASDI on January 12.

3. Timeframes. Service Subgroups should plan to meet with City staff prior to December 17. Then plan to break for the holidays -- between December 18 and January 2. The entire Service Workgroup should plan to meet in early January, before the January 12 meeting, to internally hear from each other and prepare for the January 12 meeting. The Service Workgroup may also want to select a chair in order to facilitate its business, if it hasn't already.

4. Rules of the Road. In making contact with City staff the most efficient, it would be useful if all Subgroups followed the protocol:

Each Work Subgroup should identify one person who will be the liaison from the Subgroup with City staff. This is intended to prevent duplicative contacts from the Subgroup or its members with City staff.

Each Subgroup should contact the City Staff person that Barb Matthews has designated for information/discussion on the respective service area. The Subgroup should initiate the contact with the City staffer to arrange meeting time, place, etc., as well as any information in advance of the meeting. Space in City Hall can be secured through _____ for meetings. The designated City staff have already been advised by Barb to prepare to meet and work with TASDI and the respective service subgroups.

If the Subgroup seeks information in advance of its meeting with City staff, or further information in follow-up to the meeting, email that request to the staffer and cc Barb and Suzanne. This is intended to prevent unnecessary staff pursuit of information that Barb or Suzanne may already have, as well as to assist them in being aware of any potentially overlapping requests by the various subgroups.

Generally, cc Bruce and Dan on your emails between and among the Subgroups and entire Workgroup, to help to keep us in the loop on your thinking.

Please do not undertake dialogue or contact with County officials until we as a Committee have identified question areas and concerns. Sensitive negotiations are commencing between the City and the County on police services and we don't want to inadvertently interfere with those discussions.

Thanks for your ideas and action in response to these thoughts and your work toward a having productive discussion on January 12.

TASDI REPORT -- INITIAL OUTLINE

1. Introduction

Council's creation of Committee and its charge
Context of City finances, giving rise for increased attention to duplicative services
Overview of tax/service duplication structure in Takoma Park/Mont. County and state – legal and regulatory framework
Focus on fairness

2. Legal and process constraints and potential remedies

Constraint -- Lack of recourse to arbitration in determining rebates.
Remedy -- Legislative and judicial; e.g. include arbitration in tax duplication law.

Constraint -- Lack of opportunity to examine County data used.
Remedy -- use of Freedom Of Information Act, insist on application of "Sunshine", "transparency and full disclosure" principles.

Constraint -- Inequitable scheduling
Remedy -- A MOU between the City and the County setting forth the schedule by which rebate discussions must start and complete allowing adequate time for fact finding, thorough discussion of issues and arbitration when necessary.

Constraint -- Frequent changes in rebate formulae.
Remedy -- Rebate formulae should stay in affect for X years.
Intent to change and description of change notice to be issued a
yy months prior to proposed implementation of change.

3. Organizational and "political" constraint issues and potential remedies

Constraint – Traditional municipal reluctance to play "hard ball" with county when discussions become "adversarial" because of other aspects of municipal/county relationship
Remedy – Employ third party "negotiators"; employ "good cop, bad cop" tactics.

Constraint – Perceived dependence of Takoma Park on the good will of the County (also see above).
Remedy – Establish wide-reaching "peer" support as well as support on State level.
Come to a clear understanding of the costs and benefits of good will accommodations; separate the "perceived" versus "real" in this equation.

4. General Service Rebate Issues

Constraint – Indirect costs by Takoma Park (administrative/infrastructure/capital spending) expenditures are not reimbursed

Remedy - There should be some required means of recovering some percentage of such indirect costs. There must be some cost avoidance on the part of the County in these areas. Admittedly there probably also are County costs incurred dealing with a City. It is not clear which way the balance falls.

5. Specific Service Rebate Issues

- TBD

6. Tax Income/Stream

- Recommended changes in state/county law providing greater tax authority to Takoma Park and other municipalities to attain funds

7. Survey question suggestions

- TBD. Possibly questions regarding: the replacement of specific City service(s) by the County, with conditions on service levels; possible dissolution of municipal status of Takoma Park and annexation into County.